

SC FreshXpress

a publication of the

SC Fruit, Vegetable, & Specialty Crop Association Winter 2012

The SC Fruit, Vegetable, and Specialty Crop Association (SCFVSCA) supports promotional, research, and educational efforts for improving the marketing and quality of production of fresh fruit, vegetable, and specialty crops grown in South Carolina. The Association works with all grower groups, government agencies, public universities, elected officials, and other public and private organizations or businesses to promote the best interest of fresh fruit, vegetable and specialty crops in South Carolina from production to consumption.

Investing in the Future

It is hard to believe, but another year is upon us and soon we will see the signs of growth as spring is right around the corner. It won't be long before we will be planting, cultivating, watering, pruning & tending our fields and crops. Then we all hope to reap the fruits of our labors.

As our organization also moves forward, we hope to see signs of growth as well. We have recently received a generous gift from Dr. Louis Lynn of \$4,000.00. This is the amount of a scholarship he received in 1967 from our preceding association. Dr. Lynn has been successful in his career and volunteer service to SC agriculture in many ways and wanted to repay his scholarship. The SCFVSCA Board of Directors has set these funds aside for future scholarships so that we can invest in our industry's future, and hopefully grow them as well.

However, we think there are other ways to grow our association. We now have sponsorship opportunities available to businesses and individuals who wish to support our industry. We hope that you would help us offer these opportunities to anyone you think would invest in SC's fruit, vegetable, and specialty crop industry.

Dr. Lynn's gift is not just an investment in our industry, but our future as well. His leadership is an excellent example of how we can contribute our time, talents, & treasure for the good of our industry and together we can all move forward.

Best wishes in 2012. Just as I hope you will reap the fruits of your labors at home, I am looking forward to us tending and cultivating the needs of our industry in hopes of one day soon the SCFVSCA reaping the fruits of our labors.

Charles Wingard - President, SCFVSCA

SC FV & SC Association Board of Directors

Charles Wingard - *President*Clinton (Clint) Boyd - *Vice President*Johnny McNair - *Secretary*David Richburg - *Treasurer*

District 1 - Billy Ledford & Clint Boyd

Abbeville, Anderson, Cherokee, Chester, Chesterfield, Greenville, Greenwood, Lancaster, Laurens, Oconee, Pickens, Spartanburg, Union and York Counties.

District 2 - Charles Wingard & Chris Rawl

Aiken, Calhoun, Edgefield, Fairfield, Kershaw, Lexington, McCormick, Newberry, Orangeburg, Richland, Saluda and Sumter Counties.

District 3 - Johnny McNair & David Richburg

Berkeley, Clarendon, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Georgetown, Horry, Lee, Marion, Marlboro and Williamsburg Counties.

District 4 - Oliver Freeman & Stephen "Stevie" Still

Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Beaufort, Charleston, Colleton, Dorchester, Hampton and Jasper Counties.

Reflections. . . looking back on 2011 activities **Bellections.** . . looking back on 5011 activities

26th Southeast Fruit and Vegetable EXPO



The S.C. Fruit, Vegetable and Specialty Crop Association (SCFVSCA) partnered with the N.C. Vegetable Growers Association to host the Southeast 26th Fruit and Vegetable EXPO at the Kingston Plantation, North Myrtle Beach on November 29-30,

The EXPO provided growers with opportunities to interact with many manufacturers' representatives in one location to get current information about industry research that is being conducted. It also allowed growers to get an outlook for the 2012 year in areas such as production and marketing and simply just talk with other growers who are successful and growers who are experiencing some challenges.

The highlight of the EXPO for the SCFVSCA was the keynote speaker Dr. Louis B. Lynn a member of Clemson University Board L to R: Charles Wingard, Dr. Thomas Scott, and Dr. Louis Lynn of Trustees who also serves as the Chairman of the Board's Agri-

culture Committee. A South Carolina native who supports South Carolina agriculture, Dr.Lynn talked about the importance of relationships, integrity and faith to enhance your chance of success in farming and in life. As he concluded his speech, he invited Charles Wingard, the President of the of the Association along with Dr. Thomas Scott, Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Clemson to join him at the lectern, where he presented a check payable to the S.C. Fruit, Vegetable and Specialty Crop Association for \$4,000. He said he was repaying the scholarship money that he received from S.C. Vegetable Growers in 1967 when he entered Clemson University as a freshman to study Horticulture. Our Board of Directors met later that afternoon to officially accept the money and express appreciation to Dr. Lynn by voting to use the \$4,000 to establish a scholarship program for an undergraduate student who will or is attending Clemson University to study Horticulture with a focus on the production of fruits and vegetables.

SCFVSCA 2011 Activities

by Fred Broughton, SCDA Marketing Specialist

Even though we seldom see snow in the midlands or the coastal area of South Carolina, old-man winter limits the number of crops that can be grown in these areas. So the pace on the farm gets a little slower during the winter months unless a grower has greenhouses to protect his crops from the low temperatures. I strongly urge growers to use these winter months to review their overall performance for 2011 and make the changes in their farming operations that will help them get the highest return on their investment. However, the growers must also focus on those areas of their farming operation that need to be strength-

Just as growers should review their farming operation, the S.C. Fruits, Vegetables and Specialty Crop Association (the Association) needs to review its plan of operation at the end of its year. The review allows the Association to assess its effectiveness in servicing its members. As I reviewed the Association's activities for last year (2011), I decided to highlight some of the Association's activities in the *Fresh X Press* Newsletter.

The tasks that were completed in 2011 include:

- 1-Securing a Specialty Crop Block Grant to conduct Food Safety and Marketing Education for small and minority farmers.
- 2-Established a working relationship with the Food Science Department at Clemson University, Clemson Extension. Service, S.C. State University Extension Program to assist in conducting two Food Safety and Marketing Workshops.
- 3-Collaborated with researchers to promote the Field Days that were held at the Clemson Research Centers.
- 4-Provided information and handouts at the Extension Service Vegetable Growers Spring and Fall Meetings.
- 5-The Association was represented at the S.C. Senate Hearing on naming "Collard Greens" the S.C. State Vegetable.
- 6-One of our members was recognized for her work in helping the students at Rocky Creek Elementary School establish a school garden during the Governor's Bill signing ceremony that named Collard Greens as the State Vegetable.
- 7-Funds from the Specialty Crop Block Grant were used to support four additional workshops on marketing for small and minority farmers.
- 8-Collaborated with the N.C. Vegetable Growers to conduct the Annual Southeast Fruit and Vegetable EXPO in November.
- 9-Developed a sponsorship program to allow individuals and corporations to donate funds to the association for educational and research purposes.
- 10-Established a Scholarship Program to assist undergraduate students at Clemson University who will study Horticulture with a focus on fruits and vegetables.
- 11-Participated in a mini-taste of South Carolina at the State Farmers Market in June to display, promote and let the public taste South Carolina grown products that were provided by the association members.
- 12-Supported the fruit and vegetable research that is being conducted at Clemson University Research Stations and also participated in their field days.

SC Watermelon Industry News

by Brad Boozer, SCDA Marketing Specialist

The South Carolina Watermelon Association is very active and growing. The 2011 watermelon crop came in early this past year because of the excessive heat. Growers responded immediately and got the crop harvested and delivered to its destination. Farmers adapted well to the challenge and got the work done.

The SCWA is very busy during the year with promotions. These promotions consist of grocery stores, fairs, festivals, farmers markets, kids camps, sporting events, etc. The SCWA is always looking for new avenues to promote watermelon which helps the farmers of SC. SCWA participates in 50-60 promotions per year.

The association is a huge supporter of watermelon research conducted at the Edisto Research Station in Blackville and the USDA Vegetable Laboratory in Charleston. The association feels that the research is very informative to farmers and it is a necessity for the industry to strive in SC. Production Methods, Varieties, Irrigation, Grafting, Diseases, etc. are some of the research that is conducted. The SCWA searches for ways to find funding through grants to support research or promotions. This past year, the association received money from the Specialty Crop Grant.

Each year, the SCWA has it annual meeting in January. Growers, shippers, chemical salesman, seed dealers and retailers attend the meeting. Educational sessions are held at the meeting to inform the farmers about new technology or give them ideas for the new growing season. The association crowns a watermelon queen who promotes watermelon throughout the year.

The SCWA is looking for new avenues to promote watermelon and educate consumers in 2012. The association is always recruiting new members. To become a member of the association is only \$40.

Contact Brad Boozer at 803-734-2225 or email bboozer@scda.sc.gov. The SCWA has a lot to offer to farmers and consumers.

2012 Watermelon Spray Guide



Spray recommendations for watermelon are based on the fact that "It is easier to prevent disease than to cure it."

The 2012 Watermelon Spray Guide by Anthony P. Keinath, Extension Plant Pathologist, Coastal REC, Charleston, SC and Gilbert A. Miller, Area Vegetable Specialist, Edisto REC, Blackville, SC is now available.

To download the full Watermelon Spray Guide for 2012, visit www.agriculture.sc.gov/SCFVSC or www.scwatermelons.com.

The Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

by Amy London, SCDA Marketing Specialist

The Specialty Crop Block Grant Program is a partnership between the USDA, the SCDA, and stakeholders in specialty crops. This federal grant program is authorized under the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004 and was amended under the 2008 Farm Bill. The purpose of the block grants are to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops, which are defined as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops, including floriculture.

Each Federal Fiscal Year, the SCDA looks forward to with partnering with organizations within the State and working on projects that will ultimately increase the production and consumption of specialty crops that are grown in SC. Project ideas generally encompass one of these topics; increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge through consumption of specialty crops, enhancing food safety, improving food access in underserved communities, improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems, investing in specialty crop research, providing GAP/GHP/GMP,

including cost share arrangements for funding audits of small farmer, packer and processor systems, developing new and improved specialty crop varieties, eradicating pest and plant health issues, fostering organic and sustainable production practices, increasing the competitiveness of specialty crop farmers, including Native American and disadvantaged farmers, and developing local and regional food systems.

This grant opportunity is a great way for growers to get together and find a way to solve a problem that they may all share. The program funds are restricted, and individuals may not apply for benefits that will only be shared on their farm.

The Announcement for Proposals will be made in March, 2012. The Application will be posted on the SCDA website. Questions may also be directed to Amy Howard London, Grants Administrator, SCDA at alondon@scda.sc.gov.

South Carolina Specialty Food Association

by Jackie Moore, SCDA Marketing Specialist and SCSFA Director





The South Carolina Specialty Food Association is teaming up with the South Carolina Department of Agriculture to host a weekly indoor Certified SC Winter Farmers Market in the Corbett Building at the State Farmers Market, 3483 Charleston Highway in West Columbia. SC State Farmers Market - where Certified SC Grown is always in season

Think the season is over for fresh from the farmers market? Think again! When most community based farmers markets are closed for the season, the South Carolina State Farmers Market is just gearing up for the winter.

Rain or shine, beginning Saturday, January 7, 2012 for 13 Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. through March 31st, visitors will be able to enjoy shopping for locally grown or processed products in the warm and cozy confines of a heated, indoor facility. How great is that!

The SC State Farmers Market has something local every season. The chickens are still laying eggs. The honey is still sweet. The greens are still leafy and crisp. There's always something to enjoy year-round that is produced right here in South Carolina.

The Corbett Building is a market within a market. We have 15 companies showcasing their wares. Here are some of the items you will find in the Corbett building during the Certified SC Winter Farmers Market: Goat milk Soap, Body scrubs, Shea butter, Soy candles, SC Made Painted crafts & jewelry, Gourmet Himalayan Crystal Table Salt, Organic Cookies and Bars, Italian Bread, Baked Goods: Pies, Cakes, Breads, Cookies, Muffins, Cupcakes, 100% Grass Fed Beef, Kiwi Jam, Wine, Juice, Jams, Jellies, Nuts, Honey, Sauces, Syrups, Collards, Cabbage, Sweet Potatoes, Baked Sweet Potatoes, Cured Ham Hocks, Cured Bacon, Eggs, BBQ Sauce & Rubs, Baking Mixes, Canned Goods, Snack items, Gift Baskets, Dip, Sauce, and Dessert Mixes, Peanut Brittle, Olive oil, Frozen Blueberries & Pears

In addition to the Certified SC Winter Farmers Market, during the month of January, market visitors are invited to drop their dimes and dollars in the soup pots that will be situated throughout the Corbett Building for the Souper Bowl of Caring. There will also be collection containers to drop off canned goods and other non-perishable foods. The funds and foods will be designated for Harvest Hope Food Bank.

Something's always in season at the SC State Farmers Market!

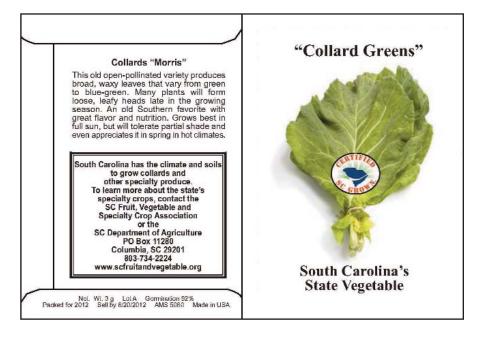
SCFVSCA uses State Vegetable to promote Specialty Crops in SC

The SCFVSCA has teamed up with the South Carolina Department of Agriculture to promote locally grown specialty crops.

The goal of this effort is to encourage more production and marketing of more specialty crops in South Carolina bydistributing packets of collard greens seed, SC's State Vegetable, to growers and other residents who attend meetings this spring. The seed packets contain 3 grams of seeds with some guidelines for planting.

For more information about this specialty crops promotion, contact

Fred Broughton 803-734-2224 fbrough@scda.sc.gov



Certified South Carolina Program

by Ansley Rast Turnblad, SCDA Marketing Specialist and Certified SC Coordinator



Want to show your support for the Certified SC Grown program? Do you want to let everyone know you're Certified SC Grown – meaning you're born and bred in South Carolina? If the answer is 'yes' then you should wear Certified SC Grown apparel.



Ken Carey of Columbia, SC developed BuyCertifiedSC.com to increase consumer loyalty by giving people opportunities to buy, wear and otherwise sport Certified SC Grown "branded" apparel.

After seeing the Certified SC Grown logo and the Nothing's Fresher - Nothing's Finer slogan all over South Carolina and again at City Roots — a local intown sustainable farm in Columbia, Ken wanted a shirt with the slogan and logo for his wife! Born and raised in South Carolina, the slogan epitomizes personal circumstances. Ken told Tye Price, "Heidi, my wife needs to wear a shirt with that on it, because she's Certified South Carolina Grown and when she's in a good mood there's Nothing Fresher and Nothing Finer!"

Today BuyCertifiedSC.com is helping Certified South Carolina members like Bell Honey, WP RAWL, Jackson Brothers' Farm, Jacobs Produce at the SC State Farmers Market, Wayne P. "Buddy" Taylor Farms and the Golden Kernel Pecan Company purchase Certified SC Grown branded items to wear or to resell to the public.

BuyCertifiedSC.com offers items such as shirts, hats, aprons and other promotional items to farmers and to retailers. Our mission is to give members more ways to promote the Certified SC Grown program along with their own business brands.

BuyCertifiedSC.com is also giving retail businesses like Mast General Store, Moe Levys, Mill Creek Pet Food Centers, Jack Oliver Pool and Spa, Cycle Center, The OOPS! Co., the BACKPACKER, Uptown Gifts on Main Street in Columbia and Shumpert's IGA in Pelion, additional ways to support Certified SC.

Farming runs deep in Ken's family. He grew-up cropping tobacco and harvesting crops like okra, squash, tomatoes, cucumbers and bell peppers. Today, Ken's parents live in Pelion, SC where they help raise their grandchildren on the family farm. Depending on the season, you'll find the family tending to a vegetable garden or picking-up pecans.

BuyCertifiedSC.com is more than a place to buy branded items. The KNOWSC page and the bottom of the HOME page promote Certified South Carolina members and retailers who support the effort.

A portion of all profits from purchases made through BuyCertifiedSC.com goes to the SCDA branding campaign encouraging South Carolinians to Buy South Carolina. To show support for South Carolina farmers and small business owners who grow and produce specialty foods and products, visit

http://www.BuyCertifiedSC.com today. For a more personalized order of products contact ken@BuyCertifiedSC.com or call 803-360-3433.

Promotions That Sell Display Contest for Farmers Market Vendors

The South Carolina Department of Agriculture is sponsoring a statewide contest, *Promotions That Sell*, to recognize effective display techniques at farmers markets around the state. The displays featuring the Certified SC Grown Branding Campaign must highlight South Carolina specialty crops as presented at the market on a regular market day.

The South Carolina Department of Agriculture Marketing Division will offer cash prizes for farmers market vendors who go the extra mile to use display techniques that features their South Carolina grown products at it best.

For additional information about the contest talk with your local community based farmers market manager.

Buy South Carolina. Nothing's fresher. Nothing's finer.

Food Safety - it's our business!

New Laws Affect Operations

The Food Safety Modernization Act and the Immigration Laws will impact every farm that produces food for sale and or hires people to work on the farm. The Food and Drug Administration is currently writing the Food Safety Regulations that will set the standards for production, harvesting and post harvest handling of foods that are cooked.

Inasmuch as the Tester's Amendment to the Food Modernization Act allows for certain exemptions, Food Safety is everybody's business and every grower has a responsibility to deliver safe food to the consuming public. The association urges every grower to incorporate food safety into their farming operation as one of their risk management tools.

It is important for growers to see their farm as a business because the government considers your farm a business. Growers are required to use the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's E-verify system as required by South Carolina's Illegal Immigration Reform Act signed into law last June. If you employ others, you can no longer use a driver's license or state identification card.

Defining Food Safety

The food safety industry as we know it began in 1998 with the release of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) industry guidance, "Guide to Minimize Microbial Food Safety Hazards in Fresh Fruits and Vegetables".

From this guidance, food safety organizations, standard operating procedures, documentation examples, and food safety 3rd party verification audits emerged. Unless you grow tomatoes in Florida, AT THIS TIME, THERE IS NO FEDERAL OR REGULATORY MANDATE FOR FOOD SAFETY IN PRODUCE...but that is expected to change soon. All food safety is currently driven by the produce industry and by the customer.

Here are some definitions and terms that every grower should become familiar with because buyers are making it a part of the requirements that you will need to meet if you want them to buy your products.

GAP – Good Agricultural Practices

Food safety principles primarily used in the field. When the food safety industry began, everything was considered GAP. We have now separated food safety classifications by location in the production chain. GAPs recommend we be aware of potential contaminations (microbial, chemical and physical hazards) and manage operations as to minimize potential risks. In the scope of an everyday food safety program, a GAP is what needs to be done and a SOP describes how to do it.

GMP – Good Manufacturing Practices

Food safety principles primarily used in the packing, cooler and storage facility. This is sometimes interchangeable with "Best Management Practices" and "Good Handling Practices".

HACCP – Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points

Food safety principles primarily used in processing facilities. Many foods safety programs are taking a HACCP-based approach to help identify food safety hazards and find solutions.

SOP – Standard Operating Procedure

These are written action plans (objective/goal, procedures). They are detailed, written directions giving specific instructions on how to monitor and document a GAPs food safety program. Your SOPs include directions, which documentation and checklists to use, personnel training, and what materials need to be posted. Basically a GAP tells you what needs to be done and a SOP describes how to do it...it's what you are gonna do and how you are gonna do it.

SSOP – Standard Sanitary Operating Procedure

See the definition for SOP and insert directions for cleaning and sanitizing all aspects of your operation – field, harvest, packing, storage and transportation.

Source: Definitions courtesy of GA Fruit & Vegetable Association

New Online Food Safety Tool Available Now

A new free online tool was introduced by USDA and other leaders from food and agriculture organizations to help U.S. producers achieve Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification. The free online tool, developed by FamilyFarmed.org with funding from USDA's Risk Management Agency, helps farmers design a customized manual to meet GAP certification requirements and mitigate business. It is available at

New Marketing Opportunities for S.C. Fruit and Vegetable Growers

by Fred Broughton, SCDA Marketing Specialist

There is a surge of synergy when you start talking about eating locally grown foods in South Carolina. Many more consumers are speaking with their dollars. More and more consumers are shopping where they can they can find

locally grown (particularly fresh fruits and vegetables). During the past year, several major grocery chains have contacted the S.C.

Department of Agriculture for



Just as growers struggles to meet the demands for locally grown food by increasing their production. Community leaders in the Piedmont and Coastal Areas of the state are developing plans to organize a local food system to promote additional production and increase consumption of locally grown foods.

During the past year the S.C. Hospital Association invited me to join their Working Well Committee which focuses on connecting member hospitals with local growers. Many of the hospitals are also interested in making more locally grown foods accessible to their employees (through on-campus markets). The growing interest in buying locally grown foods is creating additional marketing opportunities for local growers.

It's time we ask ourselves how we can help growers ramp up their production to meet this growing demand for locally grown foods. As I reflect on my travels across the state, I see very few families growing tobacco, but many of the growers who formally grew tobacco still have the high tunnel houses that they used in the past to grow the tobacco plants. Why not convert these facilities to season extenders using their high tunnels for fruit and vegetable production?

Growers should regularly talk with buyers about the crops that they will need to meet their demands during the next 6 to 12 months. This kind of relationship/communication will help growers better manage their risks by having a known market for their crops before planting.



Regional Training Workshops

The South Carolina Department of Agriculture (SCDA), South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCD-HEC), South Carolina Department of Social Service (SCDSS), Clemson Extension Service and Clemson University's Food Science personnel will conduct Food Safety Education Workshops along with the Farmers Market Nutrition Program Training in eight regional workshops during the months of February and March in 2012.

The workshops are designed to achieve two objectives. The first objective is to help growers and community based farmers market managers understand their responsibilities as it relates to food safety.

The second is to provide growers and market managers with changes and updates in the Farmers Market Nutrition Program regulations and to help growers meet the requirements to participate in the 2012 Voucher Program at the farmers market.

The training schedule with location sites will be sent to every county extension office, market managers and growers who participated in the program last year.

For more information, contact Fred Broughton, 803-734-2224, fbrough@scda.sc.gov.

Attention Growers!

Federal and State Programs can work for you!

- * Growers should contact their local USDA- Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Office for information about cost sharing on conservation practices and reimbursements in setting up a hoop house which will allow growers to extend their growing season.
- * All growers should report their acreage after planting each crop to qualify for NAP Insurance Program.
- * Growers may get updated prices on fruits and vegetables every morning after 10:00 a.m. Monday through Friday by calling 803-737-4497 or emailing kellie.taylor@ams.usda.gov or by visiting www.agriculture.sc.gov and clicking on Market News.



VDDKESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

SC Fruit, Vegetable, and Specialty Crop Association % SC Department of Agriculture PO Box 11280 Columbia, SC 29211

Membership Renewal Reminder!

January 31, 2012

Three reasons to renew your membership to the SC Fruit, Vegetable & Specialty Crop Association . . .

- 1. The Association works with the SC Department of Agriculture to identify marketing opportunities for all farmers who grow produce in SC.
- 2. The Association works with researchers to identify and prioritize research that is needed on production and harvesting of produce in SC.
- 3. The Association cooperates with other agricultural associations and organizations in SC to make a financial commitment to promote Certified SC Grown on your behalf.

To join the association or to renew your membership, complete the application form included in this newsletter and mail it with a check payable to SC-FV&SC Association to the address on the form by January 31, 2012.

For more information, contact Fred Broughton, 803-734-2224, fbrough@scda.sc.gov.

South Carolina Fruit, Vegetable, and Specialty Crop Association

Membership Application

2012

Name			
Company or Farm			
Name	 		
Address			
City	State	ZIP	
E-mail address	 		
Telephone			
Major crops:			

Annual Membership Dues

(Please check the appropriate category below.)

Producer - \$25 Allied Industry - \$35 Associate/Government - \$20 New Member

Checks should be made payable to the SCFV&SC Association and sent to:

SC Fruit, Vegetable, and Specialty Crop Association Attn: Fred Broughton PO Box 11280 Columbia, SC 29211